EDUCATING ABOUT BEHAVIOR AND THE ENVIRONMENT

STEP 1 – Problem or opportunity:

STEP 2 – Audience
Target audience:
Secondary audience:

STEP 3 – BEHAVIOR CHANGE ANALYSIS

• Describe the preferred **environmental practice** in terms of a series of several related behaviors which, taken together, could have an impact on the environmental problem.

Determine which **single behaviors** are required to implement the environmental practice. An *ideal* behavior is a single, observable action that experts consider people need to perform in order to reduce or help resolve a

specific environmental problem.

Environmental Practice	Rate potental for behavi or change Is it likely that the user will adopt the behavior? [yes, maybe, don't know, no] Does it meet Does it Does it provide Is it Is						Recommended behavior	Describe outreach education strategy Use audience information. • Ask for a commitment?		
Describe the practice that a specific audience can implement to address the environmental problem.	Single Behaviors What does the audience need to be able to do? [one behavior per statement.]	Audience Information What are the audience skills/ interests? What additional audience information is needed?	an audience need or address an interest?	have an impact on the problem?	users with an observable consequence?	similar to what the user does already?	simple for the user to do?	cost in time and energy for the user?	Select behaviors that have potential for adoption. Revise target audience selection, if necessary.	 Provide a specific prompt, near behavior? Communicate the norm? Remove barriers? Provide information? Increase skills? Engage in a problem-solving activity?

DEFINING SINGLE BEHAVIORS – Leading to an environmental practice

Hints for defining each single behavior

- 1. Define the environmental problem and the overall objective of the communication or outreach program. Refer to these ideas as you develop your list of single behaviors that will lead to the preferred environmental practice.
- 2. Identify target audiences. *Primary* audiences are people who perform the behavior. *Secondary* audiences are people who influence the primary audience.
- 3. Express ideal behaviors as:
 - a) what the primary audience should do, not what should be done for them
- c) single, observable events

b) specific behaviors (begin with an action verb)

d) one behavior per statement

Sample environmental practice: managing household waste

Identify ideal behaviors. For example, ideal behaviors for managing waste might include:

- a) separate recyclable containers, paper, hazardous materials, and organic materials from other trash
- b) store each type of material in separate containers
- c) put out appropriate materials on the correct pick-up day
- d) compost organic garbage and take hazardous materials to the appropriate collection site

Developing the education strategy

- 1. Compare "doers" and "non-doers."
 - What specific factors make one adopt a practice and the other not?
- 2. Identify skills and performance deficits.
 - Do people refrain from a practice because they don't know how to do it or because of other factors, such as access to appropriate technology or lack of awareness of positive consequences?
- Address skills deficit.
 - Develop strategies which provide skill information or teach necessary skills.
- 4. Address performance deficit.
 - Identify strategies that reduce barriers and increase positive consequences.
- 5. Conduct quantitative research.
 - Study results of education program with a sample of the target audience. Determine applicability of study sample to larger audience. Fine tune recommendations.
- Conduct behavior trials.

PUTTING YOUR EDUCATION STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE – Sample techniques

Using commitment to promote behavior

Waste reduction • ask household, when delivering a compost unit, to place a sticker on the side of their

recycling container indicating that they compost

Energy conservation
 invite homeowners to participate in a home assessment; conclude by asking when they

expect to complete activities such as weather-stripping

• ask households to sign a pledge committing themselves to watering their lawn on odd or

even days based on their house number

Using prompts to promote behavior

Waste reduction

• signs at the entrances to supermarkets remind shoppers to bring reusable shopping bags

Energy conservation

• signs encourage drivers to turn off engines while parked in locations where drivers

frequently wait (schools, train stations)

Water conservation

• ask homeowner for permission to place a tag on the outside water faucet encouraging

watering on odd or even days

Using norms to promote behavior

Waste reduction

• ask supermarket shoppers to wear a button that shows their support for buying products

that are recyclable or have recycled content

Energy conservation

 \bullet in stores, attach decals to energy-efficient products indicating how many people believe it

is important to purchase environmentally friendly products

Water conservation

• to encourage odd/even watering, ask householders to place a sign on their front lawn that

asks "Are You Odd or Even?"

Remove barriers to behavior

Waste reduction

• it is difficult to identify products that are recyclable or have recycled content. Solution:

provide prompts that make identification easier.

Energy conservation

• homeowners lack the skill to install energy-efficient devices. Solution: use home

assessment opportunities to instruct homeowners.

Water conservation

• it is too expensive to install a low-flow toilet. Solution: allow the cost of the toilet and

installation to be paid for from savings in the water bill.